

Region 3 GPRA Baseline RCRA Corrective Action Facility

Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory

814 Pittsburgh McKeesport Blvd.
West Mifflin, PA 15122
Congressional District 18
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Current Progress at the Site

In 1990, the DOE Pittsburgh Naval Reactors Office and EPA Region III signed a Consent Order which required that a RCRA Facility Investigation (RFI) and Corrective Measures Study (CMS) be performed at the Site. The purpose of the RFI is to characterize the nature and extent of any contamination at a facility. Site-specific remediation alternatives, based on the findings of this investigation, were then evaluated in the CMS.

The investigation of groundwater, surface water, soil, sediment, and air at the Site was completed in 1993 and EPA approved a *Final RFI Report* in August, 1994. The RFI report found that areas of groundwater and soils at the Site contained chemical residues. The *Final CMS Report* was submitted to the EPA in November, 1994, and approved by EPA in March, 1995. This report recommended actions to mitigate risks to human health and to reduce the levels of chemical residues in the environment.

In September 1995, EPA issued a *Statement of Basis* which identified EPA's proposed corrective action remedy for the facility and requested public comment on its proposal. EPA responded to all public comments that were received, and finalized the selection of a remedy for the facility in a report titled, *Final Decision and Response to Comments* (FDRTC), dated October 1997. Since the EPA determined that Bettis had satisfied the provisions of the RFI/CMS Consent Order, that Consent Order was terminated in November 1997.

Bettis-Pittsburgh has implemented or completed many of the final corrective measures outlined in the October, 1997 report. Under a Consent Order and Agreement with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Bettis-Pittsburgh has installed a Springwater Intercept System to collect and treat groundwater. Other completed source control activities include removal of contaminated sediment and/or liquid from portions of the facility's storm water sewer system and underground coke gas lines (remaining from historical non-Bettis usage), removal of a localized area of contaminated soil and removal of a breached section of an abandoned coke gas line.

Monitoring programs for groundwater, stream water and sediment, storm sewers, and the coke gas lines are in place to ensure these media continue not to present an unacceptable risk. Institutional controls are in place to ensure protection of on-site personnel during activities which may include contact with media containing chemical residues.

On April 16, 2001, the Final Administrative Order on Consent (Final Consent Order) between DOE Pittsburgh Naval Reactors Office and EPA Region III became effective. Since several corrective measures identified in the FDRTC have already been implemented (see above), the Final Consent Order provides for only three remaining tasks.

The first task is the completion of a study of groundwater flow on the northern boundary of the

facility to evaluate whether groundwater seepage in this area may present a threat to human health and the environment and thus require collection and treatment. This study is currently in progress.

The second task is the installation and operation of a soil vapor extraction (SVE) system to remediate soils in an area reportedly used to deposit materials from excavation activities (Bettis Landfill). SVE removes volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from soils by inducing airflow through the soil. Carbon filters then remove the VOCs from the airstream. Removal of the soil contaminants should reduce sources of contamination to groundwater. The design of this system has been completed and construction of the system has been initiated.

The third task is the continued monitoring of environmental media at the Site and reporting of the results.

Site Description

The Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory (Bettis-Pittsburgh) consists of approximately 202 acres located on Pittsburgh-McKeesport Blvd. in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania, approximately eight miles southeast of the downtown section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Bettis-Pittsburgh is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and is currently operated by Bechtel Bettis, Incorporated. Operations at Bettis-Pittsburgh began in 1949 and continue today. These operations include the designing, developing, testing and monitoring operations of nuclear propulsion plants for Naval surface ships and submarines. Specifically, Bettis-Pittsburgh exists to support this nation's capability to deploy and maintain a modern nuclear navy.

Operations at Bettis-Pittsburgh result in the generation of small quantities of chemical hazardous wastes. These wastes include acid solutions, polychlorinated biphenyls, photographic solutions, oil solutions containing metals and organic solvents, batteries, and organic solvent contaminated solids. These wastes are managed in accordance with applicable State, Federal, and local regulations. Wastes are stored only as necessary to accumulate sufficient volume for economical shipment to a waste disposal vendor. Wastes are not disposed of on the site. Waste treatment and disposal methods are chosen to reduce long-term concerns and threats to the environment.

Site Responsibility

RCRA Corrective Action activities at this facility are being conducted under the direction of EPA Region III with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Contaminants

The main chemical residues in groundwater are VOCs, primarily tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene. Soil contaminants include these same VOCs, as well as polychlorinated biphenyls (primarily Aroclors 1248 and 1254), and certain polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (primarily benzo(a)pyrene).

Environmental Indicators

Current human exposure and migration of contaminated groundwater at Bettis-Pittsburgh have been

determined to be under control.

Community Interaction

Bettis-Pittsburgh conducted the RFI/CMS in accordance with a Community Relations Plan approved by the EPA. That plan required periodic notification of employees, the general public, and various state and local government agencies of environmental activities at Bettis-Pittsburgh. Newsletters, press releases, bimonthly progress reports, and letters were used to make these notifications.

EPA released a *Statement of Basis* for the Bettis-Pittsburgh Laboratory in September 1995. This document outlined the corrective measures that EPA proposed for Bettis-Pittsburgh. The public was invited to comment on the proposal during a 30-day public comment period that commenced on October 3, 1995. Bettis-Pittsburgh, a local environmental coalition, the municipality of West Mifflin, and an adjacent industrial facility provided comments to the EPA. Commentors did not propose any additional alternatives that had not been considered in the CMS. EPA considered all comments prior to issuance of the *Final Decision and Response to Comments*.

A Community Relations Plan for the Final Consent Order has been developed as part of the work documents for the implementation of the soil vapor extraction at the Bettis Landfill.

An information repository has been established to provide local residents, employees, local government representatives, and any other interested party the opportunity to examine information related to the environmental investigation activities at Bettis-Pittsburgh. The environmental information can be reviewed at the following local library:

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Science and Technology Department
4400 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Government Contact

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For more information about EPA's corrective action webpage, including Environmental Indicators, please visit our site at: www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/correctiveaction.htm